INL News Release FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE May 23, 2012

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Historic nuclear reactor opens for summer tours

Beginning this weekend, the public will have an opportunity to take a closer look at some of Idaho National Laboratory's early historic nuclear energy contributions by visiting the Experimental Breeder Reactor-I (EBR-I) museum.

Free summer tours of the recently expanded EBR-I begin on Friday, May 25. The facility, on the Department of Energy's Idaho Site off U.S. Highway 20, will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. seven days a week through the Labor Day weekend. Visitors can either tour the unique facility on their own or take a guided tour. In 2011, three new rooms featuring information and interactive exhibits about Experimental Breeder Reactor-II, the successor to EBR-I, were added to the museum.

EBR-I was completed in 1951 and produced the world's first usable amount of electricity from nuclear power on Dec. 20, 1951. The reactor was operated until late 1963 and decommissioned in 1964. EBR-I was dedicated as a Registered National Historic Landmark on Aug. 25, 1966, by President Lyndon Johnson and Glenn Seaborg, chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission.

EBR-I was also dedicated as a National Historic Mechanical Engineering Landmark in 1979 by the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, a Historic Landmark for Advances in Materials Technology in 1979 by the American Society of Metals and a Nuclear Historic Landmark by the American Nuclear Society in 1987.

More than a quarter of a million visitors from every state and dozens of foreign countries have come through its doors since EBR-I opened for summer tours in 1975. Learn more at http://www.inl.gov/ebr/.

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-INL-12-016-

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